



The week of May 3<sup>rd</sup> through May 7<sup>th</sup> is Teacher Appreciation Week in 2021. I wanted to take this opportunity to recognize the extraordinary preschool programming that is being hosted by our Busy Bees Preschool staff. There have been so many unique obstacles to overcome in the last year. The preschool classroom has remained closed since March of 2020. The Busy Bees staff felt it was important to offer families preschool experiences even though they could not be in our classroom.

Busy Bees’ staff developed virtual programming to offer a preschool experience that families could access in their homes at their convenience. The virtual preschool is an innovative way to engage families in their child’s learning. Caregivers and children have the opportunity to participate in story time, singing, dancing, arts, and crafts with our Busy Bees teachers.

Weekly, a link to a pre-recorded preschool session is emailed to all Birth to Three families as well as partnering libraries and family programming. The number of times these links are being access continues to rise. Families are expressing how much they appreciate the virtual preschool experience and how much their children are learning from it.

One mom stated that she believes virtual preschool has helped her son’s attention span increase drastically. He was not able to sit for a book to be read to him prior to watching virtual preschool. She is very excited about the virtual preschool session every week, because every week she is seeing a lot of nice changes from her son. Mom really enjoys the vocabulary words as this is helping him learn new words. She also enjoys the different art activities that we provide, as they are not things she would think of.

Thank you, Leah, Steffani, Tonya, and Carolina for your commitment to keeping high quality preschool experience available to the children and families in our community!

Early Childhood teaching is not for the weak at heart. An article in Beyond the Journal: Young Children identifies the twelve characteristics of effective Early Childhood teachers as:

- Passion to make a difference
- Perseverance to overcome challenges
- Willingness to take risks and shake up the status quo
- Pragmatism to know which battles to fight and which to let go
- Flexibility for never ending change and unexpected turns
- Respect for each child and family as unique individuals
- Creativity for making the most of limited resources and less than ideal environments
- Authenticity to know who you are and what you believe in
- Love of learning to build lifelong learners
- High energy to get up every day and work on behalf of children and families
- Sense of humor for filling a room with spontaneous laughter